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Notes of the Month.

The intimation that the Rev. Alexander Gordon had resigned his position as Principal of the Unitarian Home Missionary College will be specially interesting to his many friends in the North of Ireland. It was thence he was called, after a long and successful ministry in the First Presbyterian Church, Belfast, to take up duties for which he was so eminently qnalified. His virile personality, his profound scholarship, his ability to exercise a strong and fruitful mental stimulus upon the minds of others—all these qualifications marked him off as the right man for the head of such an institution. Throughout a period of twenty-one years the same qualities, together with the most exacting conscientiousness and a determination to be satisfied with nothing short of the best, were so effective and rich in results as to change completely for the better the college and its educational character. Many students who came under Mr. Gordon's influence had reason to bless the day that made that influence dominant in their lives, while a still larger circle interested in the college and its fundamental aims rejoiced to see it take an increasingly important place in the life of the Unitarian community. Consequently Mr. Gordon will receive and fully deserves abundant grateful acknowledgments of the splendid work he has accomplished, together with the hope that he may be spared for many years to enjoy the leisure he has so well earned.

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It was no easy matter for the College Committee to appoint a suitable successor to Mr. Gordon, but we consider that in the selection of Dr. Mellone, and in his acceptance of the position of Principal, the difficulty has been well met. He too is well known to our readers, both as minister and writer, while his intellectual gifts have made him familiar to many people outside our own community. In October he will enter upon his new duties in Manchester, and his subsequent career will be followed with the most sympathetic interest, and with no less confident expectation that he will more than justify the honours conferred upon him.

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The following extract from *The Daily Province*, Vancouver, B.C., will be of interest to our readers as showing that the great question of Subscription *v.* Non-subscription is still very much alive. The report says:—

Higher Criticism and New Theology were the themes of discussions at the session of the Winnipeg Presbytery held in July. "What we want," said Rev. F. B.

Duval, ex-Moderator of the General Assembly, "is a catechism of instructions that can't be impeached as far as the human mind can understand the mystery of life. The progress of philosophy and science has been such in the last three centuries that many beliefs embodied in the Westminster catechism are no longer tenable. What is necessary is that a central committee of the Presbyterian Church—of the leading minds of the denomination—be appointed by our General Assembly to co-operate with a central committee of every other Protestant denomination in the drawing up of a modern catechism of instruction along positive lines that can be taken seriously by every young man and woman in their Sunday schools and by young people's societies without any mental reservations. Unless that is done soon things will be getting worse instead of better. We want a central committee to define the fundamental principles of our religion in common defence. There should be no such thing as a dim religious light, for the light of our religion should be brightly burning for all to see." Rev. Dr. Farquharson then arose and took the opposite course in the debate to Dr. Duval. "There was no doubt," he said, "that progress in science and philosophy had done a great deal to shake some branches of their faith, but he thought that the Westminster catechism was good enough for the Presbyterian Church at present." Another member of the Presbytery said that religion had almost disappeared from young people's societies, and nothing remained but sport and athletics. The debate was somewhat exciting at times.

* *

The *Victoria Daily Colonist* by same post brings us news of a great conference held by the Society of Friends in Victoria, also in July. These worthy people do not require to spend time discussing the validity, or otherwise, of Confessions of Faith. Their authority, it will be seen, is still the guidance of the Holy Spirit, a sure guide into so much of truth as may be vouchsafed unto us. One of the speakers discoursing on the principles of Friends stated that the movement first came to life 300 years ago in England. In those days the land was bound up in priesthood, and then Fox came to their aid as father of the then unfounded party of Quakers. He went about the country searching for light until one day he most distinctly heard a voice say, "There is one who will minister to thy need" Then a great light shone in upon him, and from that time he went up and down the land preaching the message he had received. Fox had stood up for personal Divine guidance in all affairs of human experiences, and so to-day, said the speaker, Quakerism stood out hard and fast for the Holy Spirit's guidance in business and in social and political life, as in the life and time of John Bright of England. Friends, he continued, had always felt that the highest form of worship was in spirit and truth, and not in form and ceremony. One should read, the speaker believed, the wonderful life of Stephen Grellette, and see how clearly the Divine Spirit directed his life. Friends had always refused to take the oath because of direct scriptural teaching, and hence the affirmation law had come about greatly by the refusal of Friends to swear. On the subject of "Peace," the speaker concluded that all those present knew Friends had always stood to abstain from wars. Down through the ages Quakers had gone to prison sooner than fight. All would know how these principles had taken a deep hold on not only other religious bodies but all thinking humanity. The Quaker, Sir Edward Fry, one of England's greatest judges, was among the foremost men who met at the Hague Conference on International Peace, which demonstrated the broad policy of the party.

THE UNITARIAN MOVEMENT.

From a Sermon preached by Rev. E. L. H. Thomas, B.A.

"Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them in the sight of God, that they strive not about words, to no profit, to the subverting of them that hear."—II. TIMOTHY ii. 14.

. . . I believe, then, those principles to be the real bond of union of the Churches in which the Unitarian movement is going on. I have myself preached in over ninety of our churches, and have, therefore, come into touch with all sorts and conditions of

laymen and ministers. I have known the inner life of two or three of our colleges, and have known something of the Liberal movement abroad, and affirm that however divergent men's thoughts may be on all things, there is this common bond, weaker or stronger according to circumstances, traditions and temperaments, but it is always there—the common love of freedom, the common love of love, and the common love of truth. We can never, therefore, as a consequence, be a heresy-hunting Church, a persecuting Church, because we can never be an orthodox Church; and, holding with Bishop Butler that "Religion is nothing if it is not true," we add that if it is true it will be strong enough to prevail in its own strength and by reason of its own inherent grace and attraction.

I have use the expression "Unitarian Movement," and not so much Unitarian Church, to indicate that it has come to be understood as a spirit and a principle and not a creed. All types of Unitarians are gathered into some of our Churches. It would partake of something like the miraculous for all to be of the same mind as to the opinions set forth here,* for example. Not only are there avowed Unitarians of varying types worshipping here, and in our sister chapel, but there have been, and indeed are, avowed Trinitarians, but not dogmatic Trinitarians, and even avowed Agnostics. There are those worshipping here who believe, it may be, in the divinity of Christ, in miracles, in angels; there are those who believe in Christ as a man, but as spiritually of the loftiest type of man; there have been, and probably are, some who are jealous of anyone thinking of Christ as much different from other men in spiritual power and conduct of life. All these, and even other types, find it possible to join in common worship here, and in varying degrees find it possible to do something to further the idea of a progressive humanity, of sweeter manners, purer laws, of a helpful brotherly spirit; all of which means that there are certain aspects of truth which appeal to some, certain other aspects that appeal to others, yet in such a way as to constitute a certain common bond of union, or rather a certain common movement. I am far from saying it is a perfect arrangement, but it is an inevitable one.

The tacit declaration of all our Churches, implying that the largest tolerance of opinions is allowed and asked for, is that "we think and let think." Does it not seem a very natural thing that a community holding such views should be able to train itself to regard all expressions of opinion, all theologies, all systems of religion, not only with tolerance, but with sympathy, nay more, with an earnest desire to learn from them, to see them from the standpoints of their choicest and most sincere adherents? Surely we were the natural and readiest allies of science, not of any narrow sectarian science either, because in studying natural phenomena it allowed and asked for freedom of enquiry, for untrammelled expression of thought. So too in Art, we ought to be able to train ourselves to understand it as one of the greatest, and often one of the most fascinating, modes of expressing human thought and aspiration. Does it follow that such a community would lose anything of the intensity of their own convictions, would it follow that their own moral fervour would be damped or weakened or rendered inefficient, or their spiritual insight be dimmed, or their actions be less enthusiastic and solid?

At the very centre of the Unitarian conception of God and Humanity is the inspiration and aspiration of Christ. The Unitarian controversy put briefly, was practically this, a demand to be allowed to repeat the Lord's Prayer in the spirit of Christ, and thereafter endeavour to live up to its aspirations in that spirit.

The name "Unitarian" must sooner or later fall from us, even as the husk falls from the seed. The same ruling principles that actuate our lives are, from varying causes, coming to actuate larger and larger groups of men in Christendom. The name 'Unitarian" does not, of course, *naturally (i.e.*, by its etymology) imply the holding of the principles of Freedom, Love, and Truth, but along *our* line of Tradition it has come to be the name which stands as a short symbol for the holding of these things, and until the Freedom, Love, and Truth it symbolises are more widely won and acknowledged, and until we become *naturally* allied to those who are striving

*This refers to Dean Row and Styal.

for the same things, it is a useful name, and it is an inevitable name—a name given to us and which we do not take, as Quaker is given to those who do not take it. As far as most of our Trust Deeds are concerned, we have curiously hit upon what by implication is the official title of the Roman Catholic Church, and indeed it was the title long before either the words "Catholic" or "Roman" were added to the Church—the title, namely "The Church of God," for is it not simply stated that these churches or buildings are for "the worship of God?"

In some distant day, no doubt, when all those who are striving for the same non-narrow and non-sectarian objects "in the broadest spirit," shall be aware of each other and of each other's real aims, all names, names now "thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks in Vallombrosa," will fall away, having served their purpose and prepared for a blessed New Spring, when all will be done for the glory of God, and for the common good of man. Then will men enter the one Church that implies by its very name Freedom, Love, and Truth—"the Church of God." Meantime, if the word "Unitarian" does not imply this to us and to all our neighbours, it is for us to fill it with that meaning. And those who so testify on its behalf, and care most for it, and love its ideals most, will, when the day comes, care least when it must cease to designate us—for shall we not enter those loftier portals with a great concourse, not as Unitarians, no, not even as Christians, but as Christ himself desired, as "children of God," joint-heirs with him.

THE RELIGION OF SHAKESPEARE (II).

Rev. S. H. Mellone, M.A., D.Sc.

WE have seen that the Religion of Shakespeare is not a creed, not a philosophy. Humanity itself is the true object of Shakespeare's faith and love.

We believe that this religion of Shakespeare is at the heart of it the true Religion. It is the root of all that is vital in all religion. There can be no Belief in God save through Belief in Man. All the paths of human goodness lead to God. Humanity is the true Revelation of God. Through Man our moral and religious resurrection must come. We may be confident that those high instincts of humanity, which are able to make even humble and commonplace lives sublime, were not born out of nothing, but are the first gleams of a coming dawn, the incipient incarnation and manifestation of the Soul of God.

This faith of Shakespeare in human goodness actually grew stronger as he probed the depths of human evil. The great tragic dramas which he gave to the world—especially Macbeth, Othello, Lear—belong to a period when he had ceased to care for tales of mirth and love, for the stir and movement of history, for the pomp of war; when he needed to sound with his imagination the depths of the human heart, to inquire into the darkest and saddest parts of human life, to study the great mystery of evil, passion and crime, and the violent breaking of social bonds. He shows the working of human goodness in its sublimest forms in the very heart of the scenes of terror and suffering which he brings before us.

In "King Lear"—that frightful entanglement of human woe—the significance of this is at its height. In the closing scene Cordelia—the daughter once driven away by her father, yet sacrificing all for his sake, to save him back to sanity again—now lies lifeless at his feet. And the poor wan, hunted, discrowned king tears his thin white hairs and sobs over the strangled corpse, and finds too late the priceless treasure he had flung away. Shakespeare has no platitudes to offer us, but only the intense force with which he makes us feel that, even when the true and the noble seem most hopelessly overwhelmed under wild storms of calamity, "over such sacrifices the gods themselves throw incense." He makes us feel that what really matters is not that Cordelia should have failed in her enterprise, but that such as she can exist. She has strengthened the bonds of humanity, and enriched the tradition of human goodness.

In the story of Macbeth, Shakespeare, true to his principles, would show that in all men there is a native love of humanity,

a "milk of human kindness" not easily withdrawn from its sources, which is born, and must be, in the hearts of all mankind, which may be weakened by the circumstances of outer life, but scarcely ever quite destroyed—except in the case (scarcely natural) of a man like Iago. The tragedy of Macbeth is indeed the setting-in of thick darkness upon a human soul—"a terrible sunset in folded clouds of blood." Yet, to the last, as it were one thin hand's-breadth of melancholy light remains. Macbeth is the prey of a profound world-weariness; and as long as this pursues the criminal he is not in utter blackness of night—as he would be if he were satisfied. He has gained the object of his ambition, and lost that love of humanity which is natural to man, and finds its natural expression in the healthy social activities of life; and it is as if his inner life were smitten with mortal sickness:

> "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
> Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
> To the last syllable of recorded time;
> And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
> The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player,
> Who struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more! It is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing."

The transition from these great tragedies to Shakespeare's last dramas is like passing from storm to calm; from scenes of violent breaking of social bonds to scenes concerned with the knitting together of social bonds—with the atonement for wrong, not by death, but by change of heart and life—with the re-union of parted kindred, and the reconciliation of husband with wife, of parent with child, of friend with friend. The spirit of these last dramas is still the same—still that resolute belief in humanity and the divine possibilities of human life, with the fulness of insight into the depths to which men may fall. But it appears in a new light; it is now a faith which is calm, strong, tender, and yet thoughtful, watchful, even anxious. It is calm and strong, and tender to human frailty, because it is the conviction of a divine purpose for the life of man, which cannot be turned aside; it is watchful and must needs take thought, for it realises that this divine purpose is committed for the manner of its execution to the unstable wills of men.

"One sometimes thinks how it would be," says Phillips Brooks, "if to each star which floats in space the life which its inhabitants are living should impart a colour, which other stars might see as they pass by in the never-resting chorus of the heavens. Can we not picture to ourselves with what a special hue the long spiritual experience of the men who live upon it must have clothed this earth of ours? A sober glory, a radiance of indescribable depth and richness, and yet a certain tremulousness as of a perpetual fear; no outburst of unquestioning, unhesitating splendour, but a restrained effulgence, hoping for more than it dare yet to claim, pathetic with a constant, age-long discontent." Whether our sister stars discover it or not, we know it well—that watchful faith, that sober, earnest, cheerful, and careful energy which has filled the lives of the best men the world has seen, and given its profoundest meaning to the name of Man!

INTEMPERANCE.

A Paper read at the last Annual Meeting of the Temperance Society by Miss Davidson.

I HAVE been asked by our Temperance Committee to read a paper, as I understood, upon the Temperance question. Now that is the very last thing which I propose to do. Because I take it that for all of us here (and even for many who are not sufficiently interested to be here), there is no question possible upon the subject of temperance. It is the question, the appalling problem of Intemperance and its treatment that we have met to discuss and earnestly consider.

We have heard a vexed question likened before now to a hedge-hog, and this one is rather on the scale of a "fretful porcupine" as to the number and thorniness of the points by which it must be tackled, and a veritable armadillo as to the closeness and strength of its defensive armour.

For let one of our temperance legislators grasp a handful of the quills which are his obvious point of attack, and he is stung, generally into relinquishing the handful, by a group of inevitable consequences

which seem almost as undesirable as the state of affairs it has been attempted to change.

Let a medical expert give evidence as to the very low value of alcohol as nourishment and its poisonous effects upon the physical and nervous system, and there remains the still debatable point of its value as a drug; its claim to be used beneficially in carefully prescribed quantities, like many other recognised poisons, to be used with the same circumspection, and to our minds with the same grave results if that circumspection be lacking in its use.

Let the educationalist point out the moral, social, and economic dangers of intemperance, and there arises the point, more theoretical perhaps than practical, but still a fairly debatable point, of the extent to which free-will, self-control, the habit of wise selection, may be narrowed by a compulsory abstinence.

In these and many other instances we have a possible evil, opposed to one which has been long and deeply proved.

Now, to realise the tremendous difficulties of a particular bit of work is not always discouraging. One definition of the word "difficulty" is a thing which exists to be overcome. And this is the only definition which should be applicable to a work whose urgency is as great as its difficulties, and as generally recognised. In the tackling of our hedge-hog of intemperance, while the obvious points of attack are more or less specialised, and can perhaps be dealt with most effectively by specialists, there is a method of general warfare in which numbers tell as much as skill, and by which difficulties are quite as squarely met and can be just as successfully over-come. This is the creation of an actual temperance atmosphere.

Nothing is more subtly and surely injurious to every form of life than an unsuitable atmosphere: the surrounding influence which acts upon the body at every pore, and affects every organ by the balance or mispoise of its constant pressure. Public opinion is obviously the collective means by which a temperance atmosphere may be created and maintained. A little work has certainly been done in the right direction, or rather not a little has been done, but a little has been actually accomplished, but public opinion is on this head, as on a few others, too contented with its actual position. We are too ready to rest upon such laurels as have been gained, in place of reaching up to gather more. We look back, for instance, to the social manners of one and two hundred years ago, and we congratulate ourselves that drunkenness is not to-day recognised or tolerated at a decent table, nor is the making of drunkards, himself included, the first duty of a hospitable host. And that, as far as it goes, is matter for congratulation. But do we look back as we should, farther round the circle, to the manners of Sparta in its heroic times, when the condition of drunkenness was recognised as so unmanly and degrading that a public exhibition of the vice was considered the surest safeguard against its development? We have some travelling to do before that point is reached with us. Do we face the fact that in the reign of George V., although the public value attaching to the practice of temperance has undoubtedly increased, the aggregate of evils resulting from the practice of intemperance is proportionally greater than it was in the reign of George I.? That does not look as if we had yet established an effective temperance atmosphere.

At present we are more addicted to draughts, which are just preferable to no pure air at all. Shakespeare and present-day opinion are agreed that "great men should drink with harness on their throats"; it is not always realised that little men can only run straight in the same harness.

That word "temperance" is one which we use with many shades of meaning; perhaps I should make clear, before I mention a few of the respects in which our atmosphere will bear improvement, that my personal idea of temperance is practically total abstinence. My idea, not my ideal. To resist temptation is better than to fly from it. It is the higher choice—in theory, but in practice—even ignoring the claim of the weakling to a kind of charity or State-aid from the stronger—can the "moderate drinker" always recognise and halt before the exact furthest point at which the sober self-possession of every faculty is still intact and inviolate? Yet that is surely the actual dividing line between temperance and intemperance, and the atmosphere around it is very indeterminate.

Most people are very humanly unwilling to underline the weakness of their fellow-humans; they will shake hands with the beginnings of a fault which they would not be seen bowing to when it is full-grown; a gentle nature extends its forgiveness of the sinner almost to forgiveness of the sin. That is part of the mistaken toleration in which intemperance flourishes. The vice is deplored, it is not strongly enough abhorred. It is not possible to come into town here on a Saturday afternoon without seeing at least one man or woman drunk enough to have lost control of mind and body; and from the majority of the sober people in the streets that pitiable sight attracts no attention; it is still good manners not to see, but there are actually some who smile.

There is more or less of a tradition on the lower stage and in the lower papers and magazines that the portrayal of drunkenness is a subject for amusement. Whether fiction and the stage are taken as representing the life and manners of the age, or whether they are dictated by them, the removal of this tradition is necessary and simple. The more serious drama, and the more literary fiction, have got free of it already. The blame of its continuance rests more upon the public of the lighter theatres and the music-halls, and the readers of comic papers, than upon the managers of those concerns. The latter are not generally philanthropists seeking to elevate the public taste, but if wit paid as well as vulgarity they would offer it to their audiences more often than they do. The "turn" that fails to raise a laugh, and the journal that does not sell well, get a very short shrift. And that is not to say that the majority of this public is consciously anxious to uphold intemperance. If every man or woman who has an honest sympathy with temperance principles in any shade of meaning were to keep their faces straight and their purses shut when drunkenness is presented to them as a theme for amusement, that unseemly treatment of the subject would soon disappear.

Another point where the public attitude towards intemperance wants stiffening is in its polite avoidance of the terms drunk, drunkard, and drunkenness. There are a host of synonyms for them in more general use, some of them much nicer in sound, some of them catch words belonging to that habit of treating the root-evil of our times and of our country as an evergreen joke. Drunkenness is an ugly word, apt to the ugly fact which it describes, and treating it from the only wholesome standpoint. It is simply asking all sober and respectable citizens to keep as high a standard for their neighbours as they use for themselves

The value of Band of Hope work in temperance is not altogether undisputed, and even those who work and organise such societies may sometimes feel that the energy they give to them is not all being applied directly to the main object. But they have one sure and good result: every child who belongs to a Band of Hope has by its very membership been given the right focus for looking at the habit and condition of drunkenness. And every child, every man and woman of the future, needs to be given that focus just so long as that habit and condition is an every-day sight in our streets and public places.

These no doubt would seem but feeble weapons to some of our enthusiasts who are either working or waiting for the real heavy artillery of temperance legislation; but they have this one advantage, that they are in everyone's hand who chooses to use them. Out of such little but important things—habits of thought and speech and action—can be composed a real temperance atmosphere, bracing and helpful to the weak souls who are struggling with their own intemperance, poisonous by reason of its absolute antipathy to intemperance itself.

We should try at every point to make intemperance a more difficult thing, because it is only the real devotee who will pursue a difficult ideal to its attainment, when a great number will follow briskly until the first serious inconvenience turns them back. Temperance work has served a long apprenticeship to that experience; it might usefully be transferred to the other side. The civil and criminal laws of our country are more or less in harmony with the public conscience and morality: so consequently is the treatment given to certain classes of offence. A civil or criminal offence is committed, for instance, "under the influence of drink." Judge and jury decide that the offender was not responsible for the action, and a lighter punishment is given than the offence in

itself earned. The decision is right, but it is incomplete. The offender was responsible, not for the action, but for the condition in which he or she committed it, and that has been too lightly punished. Drunkeness should be recognised as a reason for crime and wrong-doing, but not as an excuse. At present an accused person can practically plead guilty, plead not guilty, or plead drunk, and the third plea is improperly admitted. It should be known to carry with it a really deterrent sentence on its own merits, instead of acting as a kind of fire escape. If public opinion demanded that change, it would surely obtain it.

AARON.

ON this rugged height, then, I must cease my travelling. Here cease from hope to reach the promised land; the hope that was the motive of this weary pilgrimage that kept the purpose fixed of Moses and myself; the end we ever set before the stiff-necked sons of Israel, when they would murmur and revile us both, and wish so bitterly that we had ne'er bestirred their discontent, and so disturbed their ease in stultified contentment. And now, perchance, not either of the twain shall enter in, and I at least shall not behold the land. For now mine eyes must lose their gift of sight; blind in the lasting darkness of the dead. Would that the Lord had suffered me to live and led me on until we had attained that longed-for goal. Then with the purpose of our lives accomplished, I would have willingly lain down to die. Why hath the Lord, who called me thus to serve, withheld the meet reward? Why did he not thus set the seal of his authority upon my prophecy? Seeing that he elected me from the whole congregation to be before them all the minister of his glory, would it not have been yet more to his fame and glory in the sight of all the nations had he set the feet of me, his aged priest, within the place which he shall choose to put his name there, to bear my testimony to his wondrous works—witness from first to last?

But, indeed, his work is perfect, for all his works are judgment; a God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is he. For is it not just and right that he should stay me? Is it not because he is a God of faithfulness and without iniquity that I, because I have been unfaithful and iniquitous, am not permitted to enter in? But that he hath mercy as well as judgment, well might the Lord have slain me in his sore displeasure for that I brought so great a sin upon his people in the matter of the molten calf. In that first trial of my fidelity how shamefully I failed! It was but as yesterday that I had heard the strict commandment, "Thou shalt not make a graven image in likeness of any form in heaven above, or earth beneath, or in water under the earth;" and yet I dared to disobey, and yielding to the public craving which I ought to have cured, I graved the molten likeness of a thing on earth to represent the deity in heaven. Why, Nadab's and Abihu's sin—daring to worship with a fire unsanctioned was partly mine; as by contagion with their sinful parent—a germ from that presumptuous act of mine. And was it not in part in consequence of those same sins the Lord ordained the ritual of the goats? And then there was the sin I shared with Miriam; intolerant of our bother's power, superior to our own, although deserved by him—impertinence towards whom the Lord had chosen, and impiousness unto the Lord himself. And last, and lately, the shameless unbelief in which I shared with Moses himself; when, tried with the murmuring and striving of our rebellious host, we, in rebellion likewise, doubted the Lord had power by us to bring forth water from the flinty rock.

And yet, for all my unbelief, my disobedience, mine iniquity, he hath not cast me off. Mine almond rod he caused to bud and blossom and bring forth fruit. That shall keep honour for my name for ever more. In truth his work is perfect, and all his ways are judgment; therefore in quietness I lay me down to rest, and yield my spirit. And now behold, shall Eleazer, my son, be clothed upon with those same holy garments that were made for me for glory and for beauty; that after me, he too, may minister before the Lord, worshipping in the beauty of holiness. Therefore, let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.

EUSTACE THOMPSON.

For the Children.

THE MAKING OF A TUNING FORK.

By M. W.

DING, dong! ding, dong! That was the sound that greeted my ears more often than not, as I jumped out of bed in my boyhood days, since a little way down the road from our house, and round the corner, stood old Dave's blacksmith shop; and the sounds ding, dong, were the noises of his hammer on the anvil.

Old Dave was always to me a wonderful man, for besides making shoes for horses, and ploughs and harrows for the neighbouring farmers, and a great many other things past my finding out, he could make the biggest and roundest hoops for our trundling I ever saw. Talk about those cheap winding thin hoops you buy in the ironmonger's shop, they were not to be compared with old Dave's marvels of creation. Indeed, so genuine was our boyish admiration of the kind old blacksmith, that we thought there was no other blacksmith in the world like him. Then again, besides being clever at his trade he was a good musician, and so devoted was he to singing, that long before we knew familiarly the inside of our schoolhouse, we had mastered under his care the notes of the scale. I well remember those first lessons, and old Dave's mirthful ah! ah! at our childish attempts to sing Doh, Ray, Me. But it was the kindly laugh of the sympathetic master who wanted us to learn, and so we kept pegging away, if for no other reason than that of pleasing the old blacksmith.

One day when eyeing him with my accustomed feeling of wonder and admiration at the forge, I ventured to ask him what he was making, for I felt sure from the size of the piece of metal in the tongs that it was not going to make a shoe or even a hammer. Looking straightly at me, and in answer to my question, he said, "A tuning fork." "A tuning fork," said I, "why that is just what our singing master at school uses when we have our singing lesson; but I never thought you could make one, Dave." Ah! ah! laughed he. "There are many things I can make, my boy, which you know nothing about. However, never mind those things now, but watch very carefully the making of this tuning fork, for I want you to remember everything about it, and its making all life."

After such a request I became very attentive. First of all I may tell you that the piece of metal in the tongs was cast steel, also that it was very difficult to hammer down to the right size, because of its hardness; further, the old blacksmith was careful not to over-heat it, since that, he said, would spoil its temper. After hammering the piece of steel down till it seemed to me about five-eighths of an inch square a hole was punched in it; then from the hole to the point along the centre it was slit, making, as I could now see, the two prongs of the wee fork. With more hammering and shaping, Dave then set the rough little fork in the vice, and, humming a tune, set to work filing vigorously. Before many minutes he handed to me a bright, neatly-shaped tuning fork, and I struck it immediately on the anvil, as I had seen our singing master do at school; but, lo! I heard only a dull, whirring sound. Disappointment, if not disgust, was plain upon my face, and, strange to say, old Dave laughed merrily, saying, "My boy, it is not tempered yet; when it is you will hear a distinct ringing tone after you strike it." The fork was tempered, and what Dave said came true. The tone of the fork when struck was distinct and ringing. Just as I thought all was over, and the wee fork in its deep shining blue colour finished, out of Dave's waistcoat pocket like a flash came another tuning fork, which he struck at the same time as the new one, and asked me to listen! It was then I noted that the forks gave off different sounds. They were nearly the same, but not quite, and I was puzzled. Away went the old blacksmith to the vice again, and began filing the prongs of the new fork, and this he kept up until it gave when struck exactly the sound of the old one. When Dave was sure of this, he gave me the two tuning forks again, and bade me strike them together, the sounds were precisely the same; and more, I found that whether the forks were struck hard or light, there never was any change in the pitch of the tone. It might be

loud, it might be soft, but it never altered.

Dave turned away from me then without a word, and left me to my boyish thoughts. Many and many a time did I think afterwards of the tuning fork, and why the old blacksmith wanted me to watch its making so closely. I suppose you boys and girls are equally curious to know why? Well, it all became clear to me when I began to understand something about human character, and the sounds represented by the scale in music. You all know that every boy and girl possess a character of some kind, and more, the fact that we have schools and churches in our country are proofs that that character must be carefully moulded and trained in the right way. You hear people speak of the right tone in music, a good tone, a beautiful tone: so may we speak of the human character as giving the right tone, the good tone, the beautiful tone of life. And this was why the old blacksmith wanted me to attend so carefully to the making of the tuning fork. It was just like the process by which the character of boys and girls are trained for the Christian life.

We noted the care and attention that were bestowed on the tuning fork, the hammering and filing into shape, and then the tempering, till at last it gave off when struck a never-changing tone—true, good, and beautiful. Now the home, the school—both Day and Sunday School—and the Church have to do with our characters as the blacksmith shop has to do with the tuning fork. They hammer, file, and temper our characters till they respond when struck with some kind of sound. Do you want the sound to be always true, good, and beautiful? Yes! I know you do. Remember, then, to cultivate the habit of good temper, cheerful ways, and unselfishness.

Just like someone singing out of tune in a great chorus spoils the harmony and beauty of the music, so some boy or girl in the games who is bad tempered, selfish, and unkind in character spoils everything in your play. Try always to be in tune, not only in the singing practice, but in all your work and pastime, for by the tone of your life men and women will come to know the character you possess. If your character be good and beautiful you will be much loved, if not you will be passed by uncared for and unloved. Remember, then, the tuning fork and its never-changing purity of tone, and try to make your life pure in tone.

THRIFT.

By Rev. J. J. Magill, B.A.

(A Paper read at the Conference in Banbridge, June, 1911.)

NO careful observer of the ways and doings of his fellowmen will deny that large expenditure of money is a feature of contemporary society. Strong encouragement is given to extravagance by the rapidly-spreading belief that it is wrong for a man of moderate means to save any part of his income. There are writers and speakers of the present day who insist that thrift can only be practised by the working classes at the cost of a narrow and restricted life: that no man is warranted in thus denying himself as full and wide experience as is within his reach. Of course these ideas adapt themselves admirably to the inclinations of all of us. It is never a pleasant thing to go without something for which desire clamours. To be bound to follow the dull and weary round of work and duty is irksome; variety appeals to everybody. But when people of limited means grow dissatisfied with the dulness of their lot, and begin, by an expenditure out of proportion to their income, to seek a fuller and wider experience, the danger becomes serious. Safety lies in the direction of cheerfully doing without the things that are not really necessary. Many perils beset the path of those whose standard of living is too costly for their means. The first, and perhaps the greatest, is debt. It is very hard for people given to extravagance to avoid debt. If the outlay exceed the income by only a small amount each year—say five pounds—in a surprisingly short time the burden of financial liability grows heavy. The future is mortgaged, and a shadow cast over existence.

Then the temptation to enter on a course of gambling and speculating becomes almost irresistibly strong. When a man has been foolish enough to allow himself luxuries which he cannot afford, the pressure of circumstances compels him

to seek new methods of overcoming his difficulties.

Another frequent outcome of extravagance is drinking. The connection between these two vices is close. Not only from the weakening of self-control which attends such a career, but also from the desire to drown the sense of danger, there is peculiar force added to the seductiveness of alcohol. It is characteristic of those whose affairs are in a bad way to be afraid to look closely into these circumstances. The watchmen of the brain can, for a time at least, be put to sleep by drink.

But enough of this. From the dangers of extravagance let us turn to the attractions of thrift. We all love freedom. In one important aspect, freedom is the outcome of economic independence. A man whose circumstances make it necessary that he should submit to commands which shock his moral nature is not free. Now, without thrift economic independence on the part of men and women of moderate means is impossible. The workman is often haunted by the fear of unemployment. Sickness and old age have terrors for him which are far from imaginary. Thrift goes a long way to remove the dread and to encourage a feeling of security. Without this virtue no income, however large, can insure the supply of the things needful to a comfortable home. Every rural district can produce examples of labourers who, on wages that seem ridiculously small, have become the owners of snug farms. These men show what can be accomplished by others similarly circumstanced, and are a credit to their class and to the neighbourhoods in which they reside. Under the magic influence of the same virtue, the shop assistant has risen to be head and proprietor of the large business establishment, the mechanic has become the master of his own workshop, and the clerk has found himself guiding the destinies of the firm with world-wide connections.

But if material prosperity were the only outcome of thrifty habits, I should hardly have chosen the subject for this paper. The effects on character are most helpful and desirable. Self-control and self-respect—two most important qualities—are thereby developed. A man without these virtues is utterly untrustworthy. Now, the thrifty man has desire in subjection, for he has learned how to deny himself present pleasure for future well-being, and he will never be guilty of unworthy conduct, for he owes no man anything, and so can look the whole world in the face. First, and above all, therefore, thrift is desirable because on it as a foundation a strong, manly, truly Christian character may be built up. Unitarians are often spoken of as a thoughtful, careful, honest body of people. Other things not so flattering to their vanity are frequently said, but into these I need not go. The reputation for honesty has been won by the faithful discharge of responsibilities on the part of the members of the household of faith. It is worth every effort to preserve this good name by deserving it. We cannot live to-day on the virtues of our ancestors. We must show ourselves worthy sons of worthy sires. It will be very hard to do so if we depart from the careful ways which have come to be associated with the practice of our liberal faith. The extravagant man makes the preservation of his honesty very difficult. We can easily afford to smile when we are called by our neighbours atheists, infidels, or agnostics. If it gives to them any pleasure to hurl at us those names, let them enjoy themselves in that way to their heart's content. But let us covet earnestly the reputation for honesty. Twenty shillings in the pound should be invariably paid by all who worship with us. Members of our denomination ought to discharge their responsibilities so exactly and so conscientiously as to win the entire confidence of their neighbours. Let us do our best to bring about the day when men shall say of us: "We can trust these people to the utmost. Their word is quite sufficient. They will meet their obligations both in the letter and the spirit. They are Unitarians."

Reports.

Cairncastle.—A special service was held at the Old Meeting House at four o'clock on Sunday, 30th July, at which a collection was taken up to complete the funds required for the repairing of the church and manse, and for tiling and cement work for the latter. The preacher was the Rev. Thomas Dunkerley, B.A.,

of Comber, Moderator of the Non-Subscribing Church. There was a fairly good attendance of members of the congregation, some others being present, including a few friends from Larne; Miss M'Ninch, of Larne, played the organ. All approved the style of the redecoration of the house. The collection amounted to £11 11s. The two windows behind the pulpit have recently been handsomely re-glazed by Miss Lizzie Perrie, of Windy Hill, in memory of her relatives of the Hunter family.

Kilwaughter.—The Sunday School fete in connection with the above was given on the last Saturday in July, and was most successful and enjoyable, unless in one important particular. Illness, deaths, and emigration have sadly thinned the ranks of those who assembled in their schoolhouse in the afternoon, and headed by the new Larne band, walked in procession to the field set apart and prepared as usual by their good friend, Mr. S. M. Bailie. Here tea, etc., was supplied, and despite the heat, enjoyed by the entire company, followed at intervals by lemonade, sweets, etc., provided, as usual, by Mrs. S. M. Bailie. The usual games, dancing, etc., were freely indulged in, the band giving music in no niggard spirit, and in a style most creditable, considering that the first anniversary thereof was only completed on the previous evening. In due course many friends made their way to the field, united in the pleasant proceedings and enjoyed each other's society till the shadows of evening gave warning of the approach of night, when, with wonderful suddenness, the brilliant sunshine was succeeded by the fireworks and artillery of heaven, and a heavy downpour of rain in which many were caught. But the fete was, on the whole, most successful, the catering by Mrs. English, Larne, excellent, and the music bright and tuneful. Altogether Mr. and Mrs. M'Keown are to be congratulated, and are entitled to the thanks of the congregation for their care and exertions on this as on all similar occasions. The company included, in addition to those named already, the rector of Cairncastle—Rev. Mr. Buchanan and his family—Capt. Moore, R.N., etc.

Larne.—On Tuesday, 11th August, the annual excursion to Garron Tower was enjoyed by the pupils, teachers, and friends of this Sunday School. The weather was delightful, and the drive along the coast most bracing and appetite provoking—quite a cure for all grumbling and misanthropy. Though sad causes affected the attendance, the party numbered only three less than last year, when circumstances were more favourable. Needless to say creature comforts were supplied plentifully, but the weather was only too warm to permit of much in the way of games, and all—young and old—were fain to wander about the cooler shades, or repose under trees in luxurious restfulness. Larne was reached again at a few minutes before 9 p.m. in perfect safety, and though there were many very young scholars in the party, there was not—thanks to the skilful and watchful guidance of Messrs. Wright and Pullin, the Principals of Larne No. 2 and Larne Boys' School respectively, and Mr. M'Keown of Kilwaughter—the slightest mishap. Of Mr. Wright it may be said that the community are beginning to find out his solid worth as a conscientious teacher without flash or cheap pretentiousness, and that ere long a similar discovery will be made with regard to Mr. Pullin, of whose popularity when acting as assistant in the school of which he is now Principal many have vivid recollections, and who comes back with ten additional years' experience behind him. Of Mr. M'Keown it may also be said with congratulations that for the second year in succession one of his pupils—his own son, aged only ten years and two months—has taken first place at the examination held at Larne Grammar School, and has won the Smiley Exhibition.

Moneyrea.—On Saturday, 22nd July, the Moneyrea Sunday school held its annual fete. The children assembled in the Old Schoolroom shortly after noon, and having partaken of some light refreshments, marched in procession, headed by the minister, to a field kindly lent for the occasion by Mr. M'Kenna Turkington. Here the children indulged in various kinds of sports and games till tea time, which came as a welcome respite for recovering breath and vigour. Tea over, procession reformed, away marched the children again to their games, now to be joined by numerous visitors, young and

old, from far and near. Long before the "old-timed curfew" tolled its warning clang the field presented a most animated and merry-making sight. Thus ended a delightful fete, a glorious day, and an event in our country life.

Unity Guild.—The fourth excursion of the season took place on 5th August, the destination being Greyabbey. Owing doubtless to the summer holiday season the number making the journey did not come quite up to expectations, which is a matter for regret. Arrived at Newtownards, it was deemed prudent to wait for half an hour until the heavy shower which had travelled up with us from Belfast should have cleared before taking our seats for the drive to Greyabbey. The shower had effectually laid any dust, which was a matter for congratulation, and those of the party who had not previously done the journey much appreciated the pretty drive round the shores of Strangford Lough. Doubtless it would have been a prettier sight if the tide had been in and sunshine dancing on the rippling waters, but we were thankful for small mercies, and the distinct view obtained of the "Mountains of Mourne." Entering the village of Greyabbey we were met at the Manse gate by Rev. Thomas Munn, who boarded the brake and directed the Jehu to drive to "the Temple." Alighting at the foot of the grassy slope on which this building stands, we ascended to whet our appetites, sharpened by the fresh country air, and were presently joined by the friends who had cycled down. Our host had intended that we should have our repast on the grass plot outside "the Temple," but the dampness precluded this, so we feasted our eyes for a few minutes on the beautiful views obtained before commencing the other and more serious business. Tea over, the party proceeded to inspect the fine old ruin from which the district takes its name, and here of course Rev. Thomas Munn and Mr. Herbert Barnes were able to prove of much assistance, although it was noticed that they seemed to be a little at variance with regard to dates. To two members of the party at any rate this little discrepancy was as nothing, for they appeared to be interested in only two dates—the present and the very near future. On the return journey we were fortunate in escaping the thunder rain that poured down in Newtownards and Belfast—the beautiful rainbow witnessed was our share. As our host would not listen to a suggestion of a vote of thanks, the Guild must perforce place on record here their appreciation of his kindness and attention, which helped to make an enjoyable outing.

Echoes.

A couple of years since, the nation, or rather what may be termed the financial portion of it, lost its head over the rubber boom, and threw its money at it in a reckless sort of manner. The cries of the oppressed workers on the Congo rubber plantations, of which much had previously been heard, were forgotten, and the scenes depicted had passed into oblivion. The recent Rubber Exhibition has recalled these, with the addition of fresh illustrations, that make one shudder, and a writer on the subject, quoted by *Public Opinion*, recounts "floggings that strip the flesh off men and women, who either die under the torture, or are left to rot till their wounds swarm with maggots, and are then shot to end the stench." He tells "of children being tied to trees as marks for rifles, or dashed against walls for sport, . . . of living victims suspended over lighted fires, or wrapped in clothes saturated with kerosene and then ignited, . . . of mutilations of every limb, of murdered corpses thrown to pet dogs to eat, of violations so atrocious that the crimes of ordinary lust seem venial in comparison." And all this under the supervision of professed Christians! Is it not time these things were put a stop to?

* *

Let us appreciate "the salt of the earth" when we find it, wherever it may be. That I wish to refer to was in the Church of England. The late Canon Brooke, of South London, was a wealthy gentleman as well as a clergyman, who devoted his life and his riches to the service and blessing of his fellow-creatures. He had a large parish, and to cope with it he engaged ten curates, built schools for 3,000 children, and a college for the training of

teachers. Though a man of great influence, like the Master, he was of humble disposition.

* *

It is rather late in the season for sunstroke, still there may be hot seasons in store for us, when it may be well to bear in mind that it is claimed that red lining in a hat or bonnet (?) will prevent injurious effects from the heat of the sun. The danger lies in the violet rays, the effects of which are neutralised by material of the colour mentioned. An officer in the army, who had suffered three times from sunstroke, and been invalided for five years as a consequence, lined his hat with red material and experienced no further trouble, until a mean trick was played upon him by comrades. One day he became affected, when it was found that the lining of his hat had been foolishly abstracted.

* *

How great and widespread is the desire for personal adornment! Not only are feathers used for this purpose, but whole skins of beautiful birds, tens of thousands of which are destroyed annually to gratify this craving. It was stated recently that £500 was the price of a pair of shoes made of the breasts alone, of beautiful humming birds, which are in serious danger of being exterminated! Seals, too, are slaughtered indiscriminately for both warmth and adornment. Foreign birds appear to be at the mercy of the destroyer, but seals—some of them at least—are to have a respite, a step decided on at the recent International Conference, consisting of representatives of Great Britain, Russia, the United States, and Japan. It was agreed that sea sealing should cease for fifteen years, but shore sealing is not to be interfered with. There was danger of the seal being exterminated, so great were the demands on its life. In less than thirty years the estimated seal population has been reduced from 2,000,000 to 185,000. In 1881, 10,000 seal skins were taken. In 1891 there were 62,000 taken. Great cruelty and wantonness are connected with sealing, numbers of the animals being shot, and sinking immediately, often leaving helpless little ones to starve to death. For every skin secured, it is believed four seals are destroyed and lost.

It is pleasant to learn that very recently the Unitarian minister of Halifax and the Congregational minister at Ovenden exchanged pulpits, the Halifax minister preaching special sermons on the occasion. When, I wonder, will an Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterian minister and a General Assembly, Methodist, Congregational, or Baptist minister exchange pulpits? Possibly the roof of the church or meeting-house entered by the Non-Subscribing minister would not fall as a consequence. If such an exchange were to take place there would, I fear, be much theological rumbling and thunder heard.

* *

It is recommended that a vigorous crusade should be inaugurated against the house-fly. One investigator pronounces it to be the most dangerous of living creatures. If the reports of researches made in connection with it are to be relied upon, the sooner the crusade begins the better. It is stated that germs of typhoid fever, dysentery, cholera, diarrhœa, ophthalmia, tuberculosis, and anthrax have been found on flies. In some cases it has been noted that there were over a thousand microbes per fly.

* *

"Vital spark of heavenly flame!
Quit, O quit this mortal frame!"

Thus sang the poet Pope a couple of centuries ago, and now an American doctor claims not only to have seen, but to have photographed this vital spark when quitting the "mortal frame." He terms it an aura, or "electrical radiation," and states that it was plainly visible as the patient at the Mercy Hospital of Chicago sank (or rose) out of life into death. It appeared as a "bright light" that "radiated from the body at all points," and then disappeared. The incident has attracted much interested attention in the United States without exciting incredulity. Two medical gentlemen were concerned in the event, one assisting the other.

* *

Everyone should be thankful to know authoritatively that consumption in the United Kingdom is a declining disease. Although hundreds of thousands are afflicted with it in one form or another, Mr. John Burns, at a meeting of the National Association for the Prevention of Con-

sumption recently held, expressed the hope, founded on the present rate of decrease, that in twenty-five or thirty years from the present time the disease would be practically annihilated! What a glorious conquest it would be! Old people can recollect when smallpox was a prevalent disease, and that numbers of pock-marked people paced our streets, and even sat at our tables. Now one scarcely ever sees a pock-marked person. May the time soon come when consumption will be as rare as smallpox now is!

* *

At a meeting of the Universal Races Congress recently held in London, when representatives of twenty nationalities, including 130 professors of international law, besides anthropologists, sociologists, and others were present, some plain speaking was indulged in respecting the outcry against certain black men in regard to their attitude towards white women in South Africa. So far as the newspapers were concerned, this was declared to be a one-sided question. The attitude of certain white men towards black women was, as a rule, completely ignored by the press, and so people here heard only a partisan account of the subject. There was much professed righteous indignation against the black man. Hanging or burning were to good for him! What should be the punishment of the white man who committed the same crime? That was entirely a different matter. Verily we are admirable rulers and governors of South Africa from the point of view of No. 1.

* *

I fear we are getting so much grandmotherly attention that we shall soon be unable to help ourselves. Notwithstanding the fact that medical assistance, free to those unable to pay for it, was proffered by the Sheffield School Management Committee in the matter of children's eyesight, even to the provision of spectacles, yet less than half the 3,361 children affected, took advantage of the offer made to them by the authorities; which plainly shows that the more some people are helped the less inclined are they to help themselves. Can we not do too much in this way? Is there not a tendency to remove from parents their natural responsibility for the welfare of their children? And will not our last state in matters of this kind be worse than the first? We are told that heaven helps those who help themselves; but people are not going to be allowed to help themselves. They are going to be removed from the sphere of Divine Providence, and subjected to grandmotherly providence.

W. S. S.

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